

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of storing information in a database to characterize attributes outputted by different classes of equipment, comprising:

~~providing a database memory device;~~

storing in a first database table of ~~[[the]]~~ a database memory device a plurality of attribute data records, wherein storing each attribute data record includes:

storing in that record a first field identifying a class of equipment;

storing in that record a second field identifying an attribute whose value is outputted by the class of equipment identified by the first field of that record, wherein said attribute is a sensor measurement or operating parameter of said class of equipment identified by said first field; and

storing in that record a third field specifying an ID which the class of equipment identified by the first field of that record assigns to the attribute identified by the second field of that record; and

storing in a second database table that is a child table of the first database table a plurality of subordinate data records, wherein storing each subordinate data record includes:

storing in the subordinate data record one or more subordinate fields that are subordinate to the second field of an attribute data record;

wherein the first field, second field, third field and one or more subordinate fields, in combination, define communications interface specifications that enable a diagnostic apparatus to retrieve distinct attribute information from distinct classes of equipment.

2. Canceled

3. Canceled

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein, for each attribute data record, the ID stored in the third field uniquely specifies a command such that, in response to the class of equipment stored in the first field receiving said command, said class of equipment outputs the attribute stored in the second field.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein, for at least one attribute data record, storing the second field further includes:

storing a fourth field identifying a position of a chamber connected to the class of equipment identified in the first field.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein, for each attribute data record, the first field identifies at least one of a model of equipment and a version of equipment.

7. Canceled

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein, for at least one attribute data record, storing the first field includes:

storing a first subordinate field that identifies a model of equipment; and

storing a second subordinate field that identifies a version of the model of equipment identified in the first subordinate field.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein, for at least one attribute data record, storing the first field includes:

storing first and second subordinate fields that collectively identify at least one of a range of versions of an equipment model and a range of revision dates of the equipment model.

10. Canceled

11. Canceled

12. Canceled

13. Canceled

14. Canceled

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein, for at least one of the attribute data records, the attribute identified by the second field is one of a measurement of a process being performed in a semiconductor fabrication process chamber and an operating condition of a process being performed in a semiconductor fabrication process chamber.

16. Canceled

17. (Previously Presented) A method of storing information in a database to characterize attributes outputted by different classes of equipment, comprising:

~~providing a database memory device;~~

storing in a[[the]] database memory device a plurality of attribute data records, wherein storing each attribute data record includes:

storing in that record a first field identifying a class of equipment,

storing in that record a second field identifying an attribute whose value is outputted by the class of equipment identified by the first field of that record, and

storing in that record a third field specifying a conversion parameter that defines a conversion of the value of the attribute identified in the second field into physical units of measurement;

wherein the first field, second field, and third field together define communications interface specifications that enable a diagnostic apparatus to retrieve distinct attribute information from distinct classes of equipment.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17, wherein, for at least one of the attribute data records, the conversion parameter stored in the third field specifies at least one of a physical unit of measurement, a scale factor, and a range of physical values.

19. Canceled

20. Canceled

21. (Currently Amended) A diagnostic apparatus for monitoring electronic equipment, comprising:

a computer-readable data storage device in which a plurality of attribute data records are

stored in a first database table and a plurality of subordinate data records are stored in a second database table that is a child table of the first database table, wherein each attribute data record includes:

a first data field that stores data identifying a class of equipment,

a second data field that stores data identifying an attribute whose value is outputted by the class of equipment identified by the first field of that record, and

a third data field that stores data specifying an ID which the class of equipment identified by the first field of that record assigns to the attribute value identified by the second field of that record;

wherein each subordinate data record includes one or more subordinate fields that are subordinate to the second field of an attribute data record, wherein the first field, second field, third field and one or more subordinate fields, in combination, define communications interface specifications that enable a diagnostic apparatus to retrieve distinct attribute information from distinct classes of equipment; and

a computer connected to read data from the data storage device.

22. Canceled

23. Canceled

24. Canceled

25. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein, for each attribute data record, the ID stored in the third field uniquely specifies a command such that, in response to the class of equipment

stored in the first field receiving said command, said class of equipment outputs the attribute stored in the second field.

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein at least one attribute data record further includes a fourth data field that stores data identifying a position of a chamber connected to the class of equipment identified in the first field.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein, for each attribute data record, the first field stores data identifying at least one of a model of equipment and a version of equipment.

28. Canceled

29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein, for at least one attribute data record, the first data field includes:

a first subordinate field that stores data identifying a model of equipment; and

a second subordinate field that stores data identifying a version of the model of equipment identified in the first subordinate field.

30. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein, for at least one attribute data record, the first data field includes:

first and second subordinate fields that store data that collectively identify at least one of a range of versions of an equipment model and a range of revision dates of the equipment model.

31. Canceled

32. Canceled

33. Canceled

34. Canceled

35. Canceled

36. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein, for at least one of the attribute data records, the attribute identified by the data stored in the ~~first~~ second field is at least one of a measurement of a process performed in a semiconductor fabrication process chamber and an operating condition of a process performed in a semiconductor fabrication process chamber.

37. Canceled

38. Canceled

39. Canceled

40. Canceled

41. Canceled

42. Canceled

43. Canceled

44. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable data storage medium in which is stored instructions executable by a computer to perform a method for storing database records in a data storage device, wherein:

the method comprises storing in a data storage device a plurality of attribute data records and a plurality of subordinate data records;

said storing each attribute data record includes:

storing in that record a first field identifying a class of equipment,

storing in that record a second field identifying an attribute whose value is outputted by the class of equipment identified by the first field of that record, and

storing in that record a third field specifying an ID which the class of equipment identified by the first field of that record assigns to the attribute value identified by the second field of that record; and

said storing each subordinate attribute data record includes:

storing in the subordinate data record one or more subordinate fields that are subordinate to the second field of an attribute data record;

wherein the first field, second field, third field and one or more subordinate fields, in combination, define communications interface specifications that enable a diagnostic apparatus to retrieve distinct attribute information from distinct classes of equipment.

45. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable data storage medium in which is stored

instructions executable by a computer to perform a method for storing database records in a data storage device, wherein:

the method comprises storing in a data storage device a plurality of attribute data records;
and

said storing each attribute data record includes:

storing in that record a first field identifying a class of equipment,

storing in that record a second field identifying an attribute whose value is
outputted by the class of equipment identified by the first field of that record, and

storing in that record a third field specifying a conversion parameter that defines a
conversion of the value of the attribute identified in the second field into physical units of
measurement.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a first manufacturing equipment;

identifying a first class of equipment to which the first manufacturing equipment belongs;

retrieving from the first database table one of said attribute data records and from the
second database table one of said subordinate data records such that the first, second and third
fields of the retrieved attribute data record respectively identify: (i) said first class of equipment,
(ii) a first attribute, and (iii) a first ID; and

using the first ID to retrieve a value of the first attribute from the first manufacturing
equipment.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4, further comprising:

providing a first manufacturing equipment;

identifying a first class of equipment to which the first manufacturing equipment belongs;
retrieving from the database memory device one of said attribute data records and one of said subordinate data records such that the first, second and third fields of the retrieved attribute data record respectively identify: (i) said first class of equipment, (ii) a first attribute, and (iii) a first command; and
sending the first command to the first manufacturing equipment;
wherein the first manufacturing equipment outputs a value of the first attribute in response to sending the first command.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a first manufacturing equipment having a plurality of signal lines for outputting attribute data;
identifying a first class of equipment to which the first manufacturing equipment belongs;
retrieving from the database memory device one of said attribute data records and one of said subordinate data records such that the first, second and third fields of the retrieved attribute data record respectively identify: (i) said first class of equipment, (ii) a first attribute, and (iii) a first ID that identifies a first one of said signal lines; and
receiving a value of the first attribute from the first signal line.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a first manufacturing equipment having a plurality of signal lines for outputting attribute data;
identifying a first class of equipment to which the first manufacturing equipment belongs;
retrieving from the database memory device one of said attribute data records and one of

said subordinate data records such that the first, second and third fields of the retrieved attribute data record respectively identify: (i) said first class of equipment, (ii) a first attribute, and (iii) a first ID that identifies a first address transmitted by the first manufacturing equipment when it transmits the first attribute;

receiving attribute data from the first manufacturing equipment;

using the first ID to locate a value of the first attribute within the attribute data received from the first manufacturing equipment.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a first manufacturing equipment having a plurality of signal lines for outputting attribute data;

identifying a first class of equipment to which the first manufacturing equipment belongs;

retrieving from the database memory device one of said attribute data records and one of said subordinate data records such that the first, second and third fields of the retrieved attribute data record respectively identify: (i) said first class of equipment, (ii) a first attribute, and (iii) a first ID that identifies a first offset that specifies a position of the first attribute within a frame of data transmitted by the first manufacturing equipment;

receiving attribute data from the first manufacturing equipment;

using the first offset to locate a value of the first attribute within the attribute data received from the first manufacturing equipment.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more subordinate fields include at least one of an attribute name field, an attribute chamber model field, a read/write field, a units conversion field, a minimum scale factor conversion field and a maximum scale factor conversion field.

52. (Previously Presented) The computer readable data storage medium of claim 45, wherein, for at least one of the attribute data records, the conversion parameter stored in the third field specifies at least one of a physical unit of measurement, a scalar factor, and a range of physical values.

53. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein:

storing a first attribute data record includes storing first values of the first field, second field, third field and one or more subordinate fields that enable the diagnostic apparatus to communicate with a first class of equipment via a command-driven protocol; and

storing a second attribute data record includes storing second values of the first field, second field, third field and one or more subordinate fields that enable the diagnostic apparatus to communicate with a second class of equipment via a continuous streaming protocol.

54. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein:

storing a first attribute data record includes storing first values of the first field, second field, third field and one or more subordinate fields that enable the diagnostic apparatus to communicate with a first class of equipment via an analog interface; and

storing a second attribute data record includes storing second values of the first field, second field, third field and one or more subordinate fields that enable the diagnostic apparatus to communicate with a second class of equipment via a digital interface.